



2026

A Big Year for the Missions in the USA

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Bethany Retreat Center, Lutz, Florida
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An American Missionary as Successor of St. Peter



- The first reason this should be a big year for the Missions in the USA is that, since our last Regional Meeting, Pope Francis has died and God has providentially and surprisingly given us not just the first pope born in the United States, but someone who had dedicated his priesthood to the mission *ad gentes*.
- From his first words on the night of his election, through repeated references to the missions, to the first WMS video ever, he is prioritizing the missions. It is a privileged time for missionary promotion.



An Important Centenary



- The second huge opportunity this year is that we mark in 2026 the hundredth anniversary of Pope Pius XI's creation of World Mission Sunday.
- It's a huge opportunity for us to focus the importance of the missions, to increase prayer for the missions, and to raise a record amount for the missions.
- Pope Pius XI is one of the great missionary popes of all time. In his 1926 encyclical *On Catholic Missions (Rerum Ecclesiae)*, he tried to raise up more missionaries for the ever-ripe-and-white harvest and raise up more prayer and support for them.



An Important Centenary



- Pius XI wrote: “When we stop to consider the vast territory which remains as yet unopened to the blessings of Christian culture, the immense number of those who are still deprived of the fruits of the Redemption, or the obstacles and difficulties which beset and impede the best efforts of the missionary, it is absolutely necessary that the bishops and faithful work together in order that the number of the ambassadors of Christ be increased and multiplied.”



An Important Centenary



- He wrote about the importance of the Pontifical Missionary Union in Dioceses — then just 10 years old — to promote missionary zeal and its promotion of the “Society for the Propagation of the Faith and its two allied and subsidiary activities.”
- He then wrote extensively about the three societies and his decision to move them to Rome and make them Pontifical. He likewise described the importance of the formation of an indigenous clergy and the training of catechists.



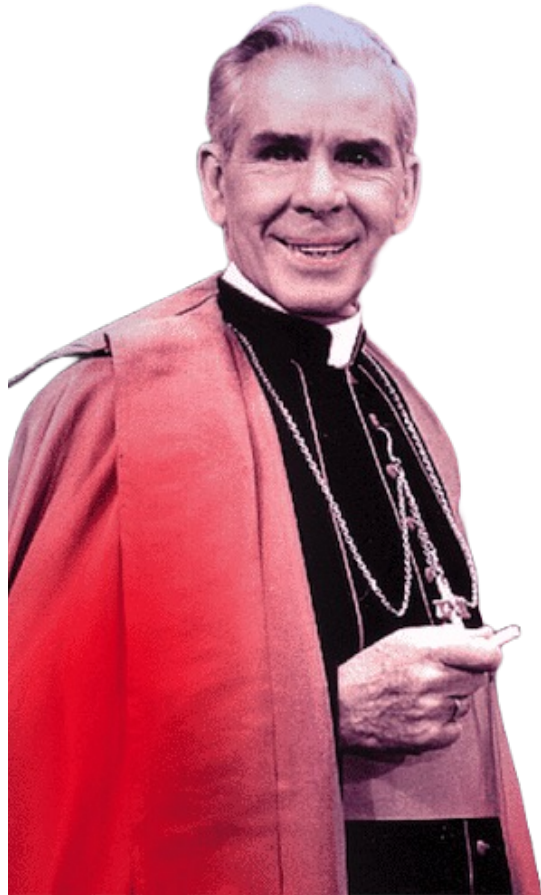
An Important Centenary



- 10 weeks after the encyclical, on April 14, 1926, he responded to a request from the Society of the Propagation of the Faith (SPOF) for a “a day of prayer and propaganda for the missions to be celebrated on the same day in every Catholic diocese, parish and institute in the world.” This was to “foster understanding of the greatness of the missionary task, encourage zeal among the clergy and the people; offer an opportunity to make SPOF ever more widely known and encourage offerings for the missions.”



The Beatification of Archbishop Fulton Sheen



- The third great opportunity in 2026 is that we will have in the United States, on Sept. 24 in St. Louis, the beatification of Archbishop Fulton Sheen, National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies from 1950-1966.
- He is not only the most well-known director of the missions but also the most successful in spreading love for the missions and raising support.



The Beatification of Archbishop Fulton Sheen



- His beatification will be an opportunity for Catholics who used to watch him every Tuesday on television, who have known him through books, videos, and audio recordings of his retreat, or who are just getting to know him, to focus on the great mission of his life, spreading love of Jesus everywhere through mission work, preaching, writing, recordings and more.



The Beatification of Archbishop Fulton Sheen



- We hope to have a very good showing at his beatification Mass from Diocesan Directors, Benefactors, Missionary Childhood Members, even recipients of the support of St. Peter the Apostle from near and abroad.
- This is one of the biggest opportunities we will have in our tenures for the missions.
- But we must take advantage of the opportunity to connect Sheen to our mission work today.



The Consecration of the USA to the Sacred Heart



- The fourth reason this should be a special year is the upcoming consecration of the USA to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
- This consecration will take place during the summer meeting of the US Bishops, June 11, 2026 at the Basilica of Mary Queen of the Universe in Orlando.
- June 11 is not only the vigil of the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart but the day in 1899 when Leo XIII consecrated the world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.



The Sacred Heart and the Missions



- In 1999, on the exact 100th anniversary of Leo XIII's consecration of the world to the Sacred Heart, St. John Paul II, said: "The consecration of the human race in 1899 represents **an extraordinarily important step on the Church's journey** and it is still good to renew it every year on the feast of the Sacred Heart. ... The words of Leo XIII still ring true: 'We must have recourse to him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.' ... Is this not the program of the Second Vatican Council and of my own Pontificate?"
- Leo XIII's consecration was not just for the Catholics of the world, but for separated Christians and for "all those deprived of the Catholic faith."



The Sacred Heart and the Missions



- Leo XIII underlined the missionary dimension of the consecration. Jesus, he said, had given himself as a ransom for all and by this action, the Church was uniting the whole human race to herself and entrusting us to his redeeming love. Jesus, he continued, came to save the lost and “shed His blood for the salvation of the whole human race.” Missionaries have been sent into the world for them, and “now, in pity for their lot with all our soul we commend them, and as far as in us lies, we consecrate them to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.” In this way, this act of devotion, which We recommend, will be a blessing to all.



The Sacred Heart and the Missions



- From 2023-2025, we marked the **350th anniversary** of Jesus' most significant apparitions about the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary.
- Pope Francis took advantage of the anniversary to publish an encyclical on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, on October 24, 2024, which he entitled *Dilexit Nos*, "He has loved us" (Rom 8:37).
- At the end of the encyclical, Pope Francis wrote extensively about the connection between devotion to the Sacred Heart and the missionary dimension of Christian life. "The enduring relevance of devotion to the heart of **Christ**," he said, "**is especially evident in the work of evangelization.**"



The Sacred Heart and the Missions



- He cited the example of Saint Daniele Comboni, founder of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, whom the Holy Father said “discovered in the mystery of the heart of Jesus **the source of strength for his missionary commitment**” (160).
- Pope Francis added, “The flames of love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus **expand through the Church’s missionary outreach**, which proclaims the message of God’s love revealed in Christ.” He quoted Saint Vincent de Paul, who taught that “the heart of our Lord ... disposes us to go as he went.... He sends us, like [the apostles], **to bring fire everywhere**” (207).



The Sacred Heart and the Missions



- Mission, Pope Francis eloquently continued, is **“a radiation of the love of the heart of Christ”** and “requires missionaries who are themselves in love and who, enthralled by Christ, **feel bound to share this love that has changed their lives”** (209).
- “The **greatest desire of every missionary of souls,**” he added, is “to be able to speak of Christ, by witness or by word, in such a way that others seek to love him. **For a heart that loves, this is not a duty but an irrepressible need”** (210).



The Sacred Heart and the Missions



- We cannot help but make our own, he underlined, St. Paul's words, "Woe to me if I do not proclaim the Gospel!" (1 *Cor* 9:16) as well as Jeremiah's "Within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones" (*Jer* 20:9).
- He concluded: "**Jesus is calling you and sending you forth** to spread goodness in our world. ... Wherever you may be, you can hear his call and realize that he is sending you forth to carry out that mission. **He himself told us, 'I am sending you out'** (*Lk* 10:3). It is part of our being friends with him. For this friendship to mature, however, it is up to you to let him send you forth on a mission in this world. ... **He will always be there to encourage and accompany you.** He has promised, ... 'For I am with you always, to the end of the age' (*Mt* 28:20) (215).



The Importance of the Papal Video for WMS 2026



- The fifth and final reason why 2026 should be a big year for the missions is because of Pope Leo's support, encouragement and personal appeal.
- Last year we were able to secure the first papal World Mission Sunday video in history. Just over a minute, recorded in three languages, subtitled in two others, it was perfect to play before Mass.
- Many priests who showed the video in their parishes — or just played the audio — said that it doubled, trebled and quadrupled their typical WMS collections.
- The issue is that many priests never knew there was a papal video....



The Importance of the Papal Video



- The distribution system for the video overall didn't work. In many places, despite US efficiency and organizational abilities, the video simply did not get from diocesan offices to parishes in six days so that it could be used on WMS.
- We'd like to ask every Diocese to troubleshoot whatever obstacles were present to make sure the video is distributed to parishes the day that it's received.



The Importance of the Papal Video



- We're also asking that there be a follow-up to the parish, by staff or volunteers, within a couple of days to ensure reception and give a verbal encouragement to use it as intended.
- It would be good to speak to the bishop ahead of time to ask for a letter on his behalf asking/encouraging/instructing priests to play the video before Mass, put it on the parish website and social media accounts, etc.
- Diocesan directors are also asked to devise a distribution plan for schools, catechetical programs, etc., to play the video and have a chance to focus on the missions.



The Importance of the Papal Video



- At the USCCB meeting last November, Cardinal Dolan challenged the bishops of the United States, in view of the 100th anniversary, to make it a record year and exceed the 2004 WMS amount of \$63 million. That might seem like a huge number compared to the 2025 number of \$17 million, but based on the experience of those who used the video, **I'm convinced we can get there if we can just succeed in getting the video played before Mass and getting parishes to follow canon law and take up the WMS collection.**



New Director of World Mission Sunday



- Because of the importance of World Mission Sunday for the overall success of the mission of TPMS, we have hired a Director of World Mission Sunday, Michael Mitchell.
- He will focus on coordinating all aspects of WMS for the National Office and help coordinate the entire system throughout the USA and help us collectively up our game.
- He will supervise the formation of materials with Communications team, work with the Diocesan Impact Team and help with dioceses, as well as coordinate with finance and development and IT. We are very happy to have him aboard. He began March 16.



The Society of St. Peter the Apostle



- At the beginning of 2026, Fr. Augustine Dada began as the Vice President of the Society of St. Peter the Apostle (POSPA), in order to strengthen the support of the Church in the US to this Society.
- Unlike in other countries that have a national collection on Good Shepherd Sunday for the work of the Society, we must raise money through direct mail, online campaigns and other fundraising. The USA still is the largest supporter of POSPA internationally.
- But the need is so much greater than what the USA and the world is giving.



The Society of St. Peter the Apostle



- Father Augustine will give a more in-depth presentation of what POSPA does and its needs, but the needs are far outpacing the support, such that per capita support to major seminaries has fallen to about \$350.
- Fr. Augustine and I saw first-hand the importance of the work of St. Peter the Apostle during our recent visit to four seminaries in Nigeria.



The Society of St. Peter the Apostle



- In one seminary, the rector spoke to us plainly of how thirsty its seminarians were because they didn't have enough electricity to run the pumps in their wells.
- In another we saw the support of 75 years in helping to build Bigard Seminary, now the largest in the world, with 714 seminaries, fittingly named after the foundress of the Society.



The Society of St. Peter the Apostle



- American Catholics love priests and we should be able to expand dramatically what we're able to do for the Society once we make it and what it does known.
- Now that so many priests from missionary territories are serving in US parishes and dioceses, it's easier to show the importance of POSPA's work.



New Vice President of Communications



- At the end of February, Ines San Martin fulfilled a longtime personal wish to return to Buenos Aires to be closer to her family. She will continue to work with on *Mission Magazine*, various mission trips, and other projects.
- But we needed to hire a new VP for Communications and Marketing. After an extensive search with a high quantity and quality of applications, we hired Terry Dillon, a Communications and Marketing Executive of several for profit companies, former Hollywood screenwriter, and former CFR brother.
- He will bring a great deal of creativity to our team. He began March 16.



Missionary Preaching Academy



- As I mentioned at the November National Meeting, we will begin this year a pilot program for new missionary cooperative program preachers. It will be held at the Augustine Institute in St. Louis June 29 to July 3, 2026.
- We are looking for several Dioceses to in the initial cohorts as we seek to train priests and others to be able to deliver an effective and moving appeal for the missions in general and their apostolates and communities in particular.



Missionary Preaching Academy



- We know that the huge opportunity to promote the missions in parishes can be squandered if the missionary cannot preach well, describe the needs, be understood, link it to people's baptismal missionary call, connect it to the liturgy, etc.
- Our aim is to give them tips on preaching to US Catholics, phonetics and diction, the missionary applications of the readings for the Sundays they are assigned, how to tell effectively their missionary story and need, how to ask for prayers and money in a direct non-manipulative way, and leave with an 8-10 written homily for each Sunday they're assigned.



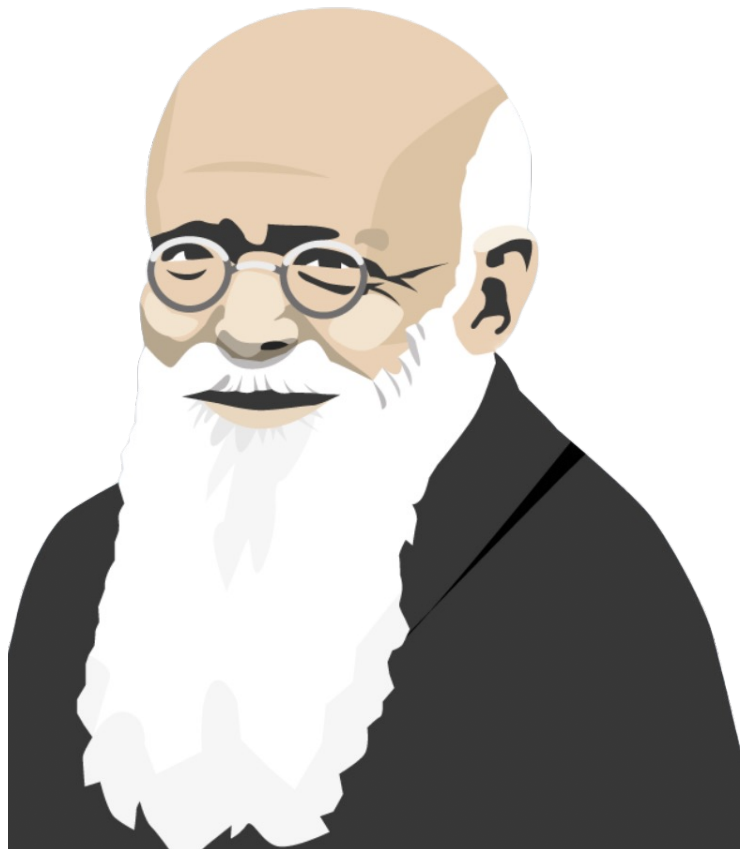
Missionary Preaching Academy



- The hope would be that, moving ahead, dioceses will voluntarily require new MCP preachers to attend the Academy in person, virtually, or asynchronously, before they would be permitted to preach in their dioceses.
- This way the Missionary Coop weekend would be one that average Catholics look forward to attending because of the high quality of preaching rather than visit neighboring parishes!
- We are also looking for Diocesan Directors who might be willing to serve on the faculty.



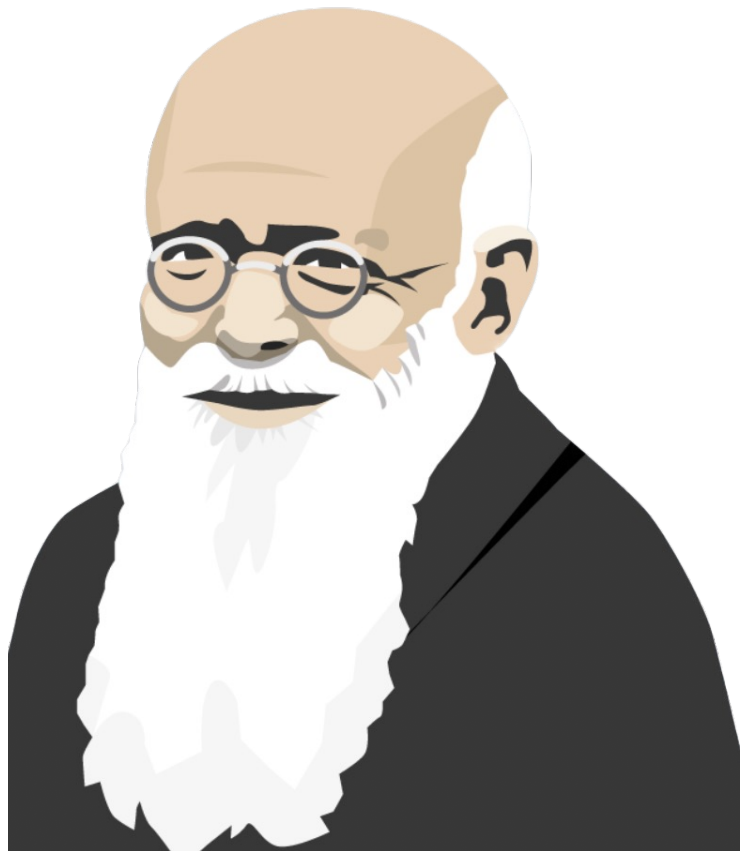
Retreat and National Meeting



- The National Retreat last November, led by Cardinal Sean O'Malley, went very well.
- In the one-day meeting after the retreat, it was decided to combine the National Meeting and National Retreat into one week so that Diocesan Directors hopefully can attend both rather than choose between them.
- The format will be 3 days of retreat and one efficient day of meeting. There was discussion about the sequence. We will try it this year with the retreat first and then the national meeting (like what's done in most religious orders). In 2027, we will reverse the order. Then we will determine together which works better.



Retreat and National Meeting



- Everyone in attendance was very impressed by the Augustine Institute's facilities and rooms. The decision to host the annual retreat and meeting at the Augustine Institute each November was enthusiastically supported.
- The dates for upcoming years are:
 - November 9-13, 2026
 - November 8-12, 2027
 - November 6-10, 2028
 - November 5-9, 2029
 - November 18-22, 2030



Updates and Gratitude for 2025



- 174 of the 175 got in their financial reports in February so that we could prepare and send at the beginning of March our national reports to Rome.
- Thank you for your punctuality!
- This week we will send out confirmations to the chief financial officer of your diocese. (We will notify you when we do).
- There was a lot of good news in the reports. I'd like to share some highlights.



The Society of the Propagation of the Faith



- After the 9 percent (or \$1.7m) that went off the top to CNEWA, dioceses reported \$16,830,531 to WMS, up 8% from 2024.
- \$232,030 came directly to the National Office.
- There was also \$9,596,848 in legacies, donations, and appeals to SPOF.
- So the donation to the SPOF for 2025 will be **\$26,582,032**, up 59% and \$9,911,723 from the 2024 amount of \$16,670,309.



The Society of the Propagation of the Faith



1	SPOF Top 20 Net Contributions				
2	Diocese	2025	2024	Change	%
3	St. Louis, MO	\$2,977,693	\$764,969	\$2,212,724	289%
4	New York, NY	\$2,202,130	\$1,261,214	\$940,916	75%
5	Trenton, NJ	\$1,600,782	\$323,289	\$1,277,493	395%
6	Philadelphia, PA	\$1,152,820	\$803,678	\$349,142	43%
7	Detroit, MI	\$1,034,292	\$897,896	\$136,396	15%
8	Los Angeles, CA	\$636,813	\$613,188	\$23,625	4%
9	Boston, MA	\$535,263	\$633,320	(\$98,058)	-15%
10	Sioux City, IA	\$496,211	\$37,098	\$459,113	1238%
11	Providence, RI	\$457,519	\$91,103	\$366,416	402%
12	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$441,708	\$391,414	\$50,294	13%
13	Chicago, IL	\$409,638	\$329,716	\$79,922	24%
14	Orange, CA	\$369,099	\$327,458	\$41,641	13%
15	Cleveland, OH	\$358,008	\$710,698	(\$352,690)	-50%
16	Harrisburg, PA	\$333,895	\$247,347	\$86,548	35%
17	San Bernardino, CA	\$331,176	\$324,603	\$6,573	2%
18	Newark, NJ	\$299,896	\$315,565	(\$15,668)	-5%
19	San Diego, CA	\$288,891	\$220,296	\$68,595	31%
20	Syracuse, NY	\$281,139	\$53,830	\$227,309	422%
21	Toledo, OH	\$247,408	\$83,395	\$164,013	197%
22	Arlington, VA	\$221,900	\$265,548	(\$43,648)	-16%



The Missionary Childhood Association



- The Missionary Childhood Association raised **\$751,359 this year, up 24 percent** from the \$606,093 raised in 2024.
- Unlike SPOF and POSPA, where TPMS-USA is by far the top contributing country, for MCA last year we were sixth.
- Many other countries have national collections on January 6 or February 2 to raise money for MCA. If every US Diocese promoted MCA mite boxes and minimal activities, we would be able to help children across the world a lot more and likely become the most significant contributor.
- Last year we went from 43 to 58 dioceses with MCA. That means 117 dioceses still do not have MCA.



The Missionary Childhood Association



1	MCA Top 20 Net Contributions				
2	Diocese	2025	2024	Change	%
3	Oakland, CA	\$438,465	\$0	\$438,465	100%
4	Brooklyn, NY	\$75,608	\$3,559	\$72,049	2024%
5	Boston, MA	\$73,775	\$89,036	(\$15,261)	-17%
6	Los Angeles, CA	\$72,926	\$45,851	\$27,074	59%
7	Philadelphia, PA	\$68,604	\$67,404	\$1,200	2%
8	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$56,187	\$12,523	\$43,664	349%
9	Trenton, NJ	\$48,391	\$39,212	\$9,179	23%
10	Cincinnati, OH	\$38,006	\$25,081	\$12,925	52%
11	San Diego, CA	\$36,753	\$54,820	(\$18,067)	-33%
12	Harrisburg, PA	\$33,792	\$30,639	\$3,153	10%
13	Metuchen, NJ	\$32,277	\$29,685	\$2,592	9%
14	Springfield, IL	\$24,113	\$20,001	\$4,112	21%
15	San Francisco, CA	\$23,337	\$21,012	\$2,325	11%
16	St. Louis, MO	\$23,193	\$21,374	\$1,819	9%
17	New Orleans, LA	\$19,275	\$18,338	\$937	5%
18	La Crosse, WI	\$12,956	\$12,194	\$762	6%
19	Houma-Thibodaux, LA	\$12,309	\$13,212	(\$903)	-7%
20	San Bernardino, CA	\$11,441	\$13,438	(\$1,997)	-15%
21	Toledo, OH	\$10,310	\$13,272	(\$2,962)	-22%
22	St. Cloud, MN	\$9,254	\$8,750	\$504	6%



The Society of St. Peter the Apostle



- This year the Society of St. Peter the Apostle raised \$1,568,028, a decrease of 44% from the \$2,779,539 raised in 2024, significantly helped by a legacy, a difference of \$1,211,511.
- Because of the enormous need being experienced by the Society worldwide, the Board of TPMS-USA on March 9, 2026 decided to dedicate a one-time \$1,250,000 so that the contribution from the United States would not decrease.
- So the total contribution for POSPA this year will be \$2,818,028.



The Society of St. Peter the Apostle



1	SPA Top 20 Net Contributions				
2	Diocese	2025	2024	Change	%
3	New York, NY	\$273,890	\$368,530	(\$94,640)	-26%
4	Houma-Thibodaux, LA	\$75,121	\$0	\$75,121	100%
5	Los Angeles, CA	\$73,181	\$73,735	(\$554)	-1%
6	Harrisburg, PA	\$60,093	\$396,522	(\$336,429)	-85%
7	Philadelphia, PA	\$58,185	\$57,316	\$869	2%
8	Boston, MA	\$57,177	\$74,215	(\$17,038)	-23%
9	St. Louis, MO	\$56,467	\$86,324	(\$29,857)	-35%
10	Cincinnati, OH	\$43,105	\$49,087	(\$5,982)	-12%
11	Lincoln, NE	\$30,000	\$20,000	\$10,000	50%
12	Camden, NJ	\$28,882	\$21,910	\$6,972	32%
13	Toledo, OH	\$26,653	\$25,775	\$878	3%
14	San Francisco, CA	\$24,441	\$33,374	(\$8,933)	-27%
15	La Crosse, WI	\$20,000	\$9,438	\$10,563	112%
16	Albany, NY	\$19,303	\$29,571	(\$10,268)	-35%
17	St. Cloud, MN	\$14,575	\$19,379	(\$4,804)	-25%
18	Gallup, NM	\$14,291	\$0	\$14,291	100%
19	Galveston-Houston, TX	\$13,435	\$13,721	(\$286)	-2%
20	Saginaw, MI	\$10,542	\$8,331	\$2,211	27%
21	Superior, WI	\$7,779	\$4,177	\$3,602	86%
22	Kansas City-St. Joseph,	\$7,671	\$5,269	\$2,402	46%



Updates and Gratitude for 2025



- Cumulatively, the amount of support being sent by the Church in the United States to the three Societies in Rome for 2025 will be **\$30,160,419, a 50.4% increase** over the \$20,055,941 sent in 2024.
- **Thank you** for all your hard work!



Some Final Thoughts from Pope Leo



- In his January 25 letter for the 100th World Mission Day, our American missionary pope reiterated that the theme is “One in Christ, United in Mission.”
- This points not just to his papal motto *In Illo Uno Unum*, “One in That One,” meaning One in the One Christ, but also to how our Christian unity is what Jesus prayed for (Jn 17) so that the world may believe that the Father sent him and loves us as much as he loves Jesus. Mission flows from communion.



Some Final Thoughts from Pope Leo



- One in Christ means that we focus on Christ and make him the center of our life and communities.
- Union with Christ and through him with the Trinity, he says, “gives rise to mutual communion among believers and is the source of all missionary fruitfulness. Indeed, just as Saint John Paul II taught, **'communion represents both the source and the fruit of mission.'**”
- Leo says: “the more united we are in Christ, the better able we will be to carry out together the mission that he entrusts to us.”



Some Final Thoughts from Pope Leo



- **Unity with Christ and with others** — which constitutes the Church — **is “directed toward mission.”**
- He recalls Blessed Paolo Manna’s words, “The whole Church for the conversion of the whole world,” something that can be renewed on the Pontifical Mission Union’s 110th anniversary.
- “No baptized person is exempt from ... mission: everyone, each according to their own vocation and condition of life, participates in the great work that Christ has entrusted to his Church.”



Some Final Thoughts from Pope Leo



- “I would like to thank the **Pontifical Mission Societies** for their service to missionary cooperation, which I experienced with gratitude during my ministry in Peru. These Societies — Propagation of the Faith, Holy Childhood, Saint Peter the Apostle, Saint Peter the Apostle and Pontifical Missionary Union — continue to **nurture and form missionary awareness for the faithful of all ages**, and to **promote a network of prayer and charity** that connects communities throughout the world.”



Some Final Thoughts from Pope Leo



- “It is also worth remembering that, following a proposal from the Society of the Propagation of the Faith, **Pius XI established World Mission Day in 1926**. The annual offerings collected on this day are distributed by the Society, **on behalf of the Pope**, to support the various needs of the Church’s mission. **The four Societies, therefore**, as a whole and each in its own specificity, still **play a valuable role for the entire Church**. They are a **living sign of unity and ecclesial missionary communion**. I invite everyone to work with them in a spirit of gratitude.”



Some Final Thoughts from Pope Leo



- “If unity is the condition of mission, love is its essence. The Good News that we are sent to proclaim to the world is not an abstract ideal; **it is the Gospel of God’s faithful love, which became flesh in the face and life of Jesus Christ.** The mission of the disciples and the Church as a whole is **to continue the mission of Christ in the Holy Spirit: a mission born of love, lived in love, and leading to love.**”



Some Final Thoughts from Pope Leo



- “Let us all **commit** to contributing to the great mission of evangelization — which is always a work of love — **according to our own vocation and the gifts we have received**. Your **prayers and practical support, particularly on World Mission Day, will be a great help in bringing the Gospel of God’s love to everyone, especially the poorest and those most in need**. Every gift, no matter how small, becomes a meaningful act of missionary communion. **I renew my heartfelt gratitude ‘for everything you will do to help me help missionaries throughout the world’** (2025 Video Message for World Mission Day)”



Thank **you!**